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Description Of Adrianople And Constantinople.

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DESCRIPTION OF ADRIANOPLE AND
CONSTANTINOPLE. *)

To the Abböt of —.

Adrianople, May 17, O. S. 1718.

I am going to leave Adrianople, and I would not do it, without giving you some account of all that is curious in it, which I have taken a great deal of pains to see. It is called from the Emperor *Adrian*, and was the first European seat of the Turkish Empire, and has been the favourite residence of many Sultans. *Mahomet* the fourth, and *Mustapha*, the brother of the reigning Emperor, were so fond of it, that they wholly abandoned Constantinople, which humour so far exasperated the Janizaries, that it was a considerable motive to the rebellions that deposed them. Yet this man seems to love to keep his court here. I can give you no reason for this partiality. 'Tis true, the situation is fine, and the country all round very beautiful; but the air is extremely bad, and the Seraglio itself is not free from the ill effect of it. The town is said to be eight miles in compass, I suppose they reckon in the gardens. There are some good houses in it, I mean large ones; for the architecture of their palaces never makes any great shew. It is now very full of people; but they are most of them such as follow the court, or camp, and when they are removed, I am told 'tis no populous city. The river *Maritza* on which it is situated, is dried up every summer, which contributes very much to make it unwholesome. It is now a very pleasant stream. There are two noble bridges built over it. I had the curiosity to go to see the exchange in my Turkish dress, which is disguise sufficient. Yet I own, I was not very easy when I saw it crowded with Janizaries; but they dare not be rude to a woman, and made way for me with as much respect, as if I had been in my own figure. It is half a mile in length, the roof arched, and kept extremely neat. It holds three hundred and sixty-five shops, furnished with all sorts of rich goods exposed to sale in the same manner as at the New Exchange in London; but the pavement is kept much neater, and the shops are all so clean, they seem just new painted. — Idle people of all
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*) Letters of the Right Honourable Lady *Mary Wortley Montague*, written during her Travels in Europe, Asia and Africa. London 1769. 3 Vol. 8.

sorts walk here for their diversion, or amuse themselves with drinking coffee, or sherbet, which is cried about as oranges and sweat-meats are in our play-houses. I observed most of the rich tradesmen were Jews. That people are in incredible power in this country. They have many privileges above all the natural Turks themselves, and have formed a very considerable commonwealth here, being judged by their own laws. They have drawn the whole trade of the empire into their hands, partly by the firm union amongst themselves, and partly by the idle temper and want of industry in the Turks. Every Bassa has his Jew, who is his "*homme d'affaires*;" he is let into all his secrets, and does all his business. No bargain is made, no bribe received, no merchandise disposed of, but what passes through their hands. They are the physicians, the stewards, and the interpreters of all the great men. You may judge how advantageous this is to a people who never fail to make use of the smallest advantages. They have found the secret of making themselves so necessary, that they are certain of the protection of the court, whatever ministry is in power. Even the English, French, and Italian merchants, who are sensible of their artifices, are, however, forced to trust their affairs to their negotiation, nothing of trade being managed without them, and the meanest amongst them being too important to be disoblinded, since the whole body take care of his interests with as much vigour as they would those of the most considerable of their members. They are many of them vastly rich, but they take care to make little public shew of it; though they live in their houses in the utmost luxury and magnificence. This copious subject has drawn me from my description of the exchange, founded by *Ali Bassa*, whose name it bears. Near it is the *Sherfski*, a street of a mile in length, full of shops of all kind of fine merchandize, but excessive dear, nothing being made here. It is covered on the top with boards to keep out the rain, that merchants may meet conveniently in all weathers. The *Besiten* near it, is another exchange, built upon pillars, where all sorts of horse furniture are sold. Glittering every where with gold, rich embroidery and jewels, it makes a very agreeable shew. From this place I went, in my Turkish coach, to the camp, which is to move in a few days to the frontiers. The Sultan is already gone to his tents, and all his court;

the appearance of them is, indeed, very magnificent. Those of the great men are rather like palaces than tents, taking up a great compass of ground, and being divided into a vast number of apartments. They are all of green, and the *Bassas of three Tails*, have those ensigns of their power placed in a very conspicuous manner before their tents, which are adorned, on the top with gilded balls, more or less, according to their different ranks. The ladies go in coaches to see the camp, as eagerly as ours did to that of *Hide Park*; but 'tis very easy to observe, that the soldiers do not begin the campaign with any great cheerfulness. The war is a general grievance upon the people, but particularly hard upon the tradesmen, now that the Grand Signior is resolved to lead his army in person. Every company of them is obliged, upon this occasion, to make a present according to their ability.

I took the pains of rising at six in the morning to see the ceremony, which did not however begin till eight. The Grand Signior was at the Seraglio window, to see the procession, which passed through the principal streets. It was preceded by an *Effendi*, mounted on a camel, richly furnished, reading aloud the *Alcoran*, finely bound, laid upon a cushion. He was surrounded by a parcel of boys, in white, singing some verses of it, followed by a man dressed in green boughs, representing a clean husbandman sowing seed. After him several reapers with garlands of ears of corn, as *Ceres* is pictured, with scythes in their hands seeming to mow. Then a little machine drawn by oxen, in which was a wind-mill, and boys employed in grinding corn, followed by another machine, drawn by buffalos carrying an oven, and two more boys, one employed kneading the bread, and another in drawing it out of the oven. These boys threw little cakes on both sides amongst the crowd, and were followed by the whole company of bakers marching on foot, two by two, in their best cloaths, with cakes, loaves, pasties and pies of all sorts on their heads, and after them two buffoons or jack-puddings, with their faces and cloaths smeared with meal, who diverted the mob with their antic gestures. In the same manner followed all the companies of trade in the Empire; the nobler sort, such as jewellers, mercers &c. finely mounted, and many of the pageants that represent their trades, perfectly magnificent; amongst which that of the Furriers

riers made one of the best figures, being a very large machine set round with the skins of ermins, toxes, &c. so well stuffed, that the animals seemed to be alive, and followed by music and dancers. I believe they were, upon the whole, twenty thousand men, all ready to follow his Highness if he commanded them. The rear was closed by the volunteers, who came to beg the honour of dying in his service. This part of the shew seemed to me so barbarous, that I removed from the window upon the first appearance of it. They were all naked to the middle. Some had their arms pierced through with arrows left sticking in them. Others had them sticking in their heads, the blood trickling down their faces. Some flashed their arms with sharp knives, making the blood spring out upon those that stood there; and this is looked upon as an expression of their zeal for glory. I am told, that some make use of it to advance their love; and when they are near the window, where their mistress stands (all the women in town being veiled to see this spectacle) they stick another arrow for her sake, who gives some sign of approbation and encouragement to this gallantry. The whole shew lasted for near eight hours, to my great sorrow, who was heartily tired, though I was in the house of the widow of the *Captain Bassa*, (Admiral) who refreshed me with coffee, sweatmeats, sherbet, &c. with all possible civility.

I tell you nothing of the order of Mr. Worthley's entry, and his Audience. These things are always the same, and have been so often described, I won't trouble you with the repetition. The young Prince, about eleven years old, sits near his father when he gives audience; he is a handsome boy, but, probably, will not immediately succeed the Sultan, there being two sons of Sultan *Mustapha* (his eldest brother) remaining; the eldest about twenty years old, on whom the hopes of the people are fixed. This reign has been bloody and avaritious. I am apt to believe they are very impatient to see the end of it. I am, Sir

Yours &c. &c.

To the Countess of B—.

At length I have heard from my dear lady B—, for the first time. I am persuaded you have had the goodness to write before, but I have had the ill fortune

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to lose your letters. Since my last, I have staid quietly at Constantinople, a city that I ought in conscience to give your ladyship a right notion of, since I know you can have none but what is partial and mistaken from the writings of travellers. 'Tis certain, there are many people that pass years here in *Pera*, without having ever seen it, and yet they all pretend to describe it. *Pera*, *Tophana* and *Galata*, wholly inhabited by French Christians (and which, together, make the appearance of a very fine town) are divided from it by the sea, which is not above half so broad as the broadest part of the Thames; but the Christian men are loath to hazard the adventures they sometimes meet with amongst the *Levents* or Seamen (worse monsters than our watermen) and the women must cover their faces to go there, which they have a perfect aversion to do. 'Tis true, they wear veils in *Pera*, but they are such as only serve to shew their beauty to more advantage, and would not be permitted in Constantinople. These reasons deter almost every creature from seeing it, and the French Ambassadors will return to France (I believe) without ever having been there. You'll wonder, Madam, to hear me add, that I have been there very often. The *Asmack*, or Turkish veil, is become not only very easy, but agreeable to me; and if it was not, I would be content to endure some inconveniency to gratify a passion that is become so powerful with me, as curiosity. And indeed, the pleasure of going in a barge to Chelsea, is not comparable to that of rowing upon the canal of the sea here, where for twenty miles together down the *Bosphorus*, the most beautiful variety of prospects present themselves. The Asian side is covered with fruit trees, villages, and the most delightful landships in nature; on the European stands Constantinople, situated on seven hills.—The unequal heights make it seem as large again as it is (tho' one of the largest cities in the world) shewing an agreeable mixture of gardens, pine and cypress trees, palaces, mosques, and public buildings, raised one above another, with as much beauty and appearance of symmetry as your ladyship ever saw in a cabinet adorned by the most skilful hands, where jars shew themselves above jars, mixed with canisters, babies and candlesticks. This is a very odd comparison; but it gives me an exact idea of the thing. I have taken care to see as much of the Seraglio as is to be seen. It is on a point of land
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running into the sea; a palace of prodigious extent, but very irregular. The gardens take in a large compass of ground, full of high cypress trees, which is all I know of them. The buildings are all of white stone, headed on top, with gilded turrets and spires, which look very magnificent; and indeed, I believe there is no Christian King's palace half so large. There are six large courts in it, all built and set with trees, having galleries of stone; one of those for the guard, another for the slaves, another for the officers of the kitchen, another for the stables, the fifth for the Divan, and the sixth for the apartment destined for audiences. On the ladies side there are, at least, as many more, with distinct courts belonging to their eunuchs and attendants, their kitchens, &c.

The next remarkable structure is that of *St. Sophia*, which 'tis very difficult to see. I was forced to send three times to the *Caimairan*, (the governor of the town) and he assembled the chief *Effendis*, or heads of the law, and inquired of the *Musti*, whether it was lawful to permit it. They passed some days in this important debate; but, I insisting on my request, permission was granted. I can't be informed why the Turks are more delicate on the subject of this mosque, than on any of the others, where, what Christian pleases may enter without scruple. I fancy they imagine that, having been once consecrated, people, on pretence of curiosity, might prophane it with prayers, particularly to those Saints, who are still very visible in Mosaic work, and no other way defaced but by the decays of time; for it is absolutely false, tho' so universally asserted, that the Turks defaced all the images that they found in the city.

The mosque of Sultan *Solyman* is an exact square, with four fine towers in the angles; in the midst is a noble *Cupola* supported with beautiful marble pillars; two lesser at the ends, supported in the same manner; the pavement and gallery round the Mosque, of marble; under the great cupola is a fountain adorned with such fine coloured pillars, that I can hardly think them natural marble; on one side is the pulpit of white marble, and on the other the little gallery for the Grand Signior. A fine stair-case leads to it, and it is built up with gilded lattices. At the upper-end is a sort of altar, where the name of God is written; and, before it, stand two candlesticks, as high as a man, with wax candles as thick as three flambeaux. The pavement is spread with fine

carpets, and the Mosque illuminated with a vast number of lamps. The court leading to it is very spacious, with galleries of marble of green columns, covered with twenty-eight leaded cupolas on two sides, and a fine fountain of basons in the middle of it.

This description may serve for all the Mosques in Constantinople. The model is exactly the same, and they only differ in largeness and thickness of materials.

The *Exchanges* are all noble buildings, full of fine alleys, the greatest part supported with pillars, and kept wonderfully neat. Every trade has its distinct alley, where the merchandize is disposed in the same order as in the New Exchange at London. The *Bisisten*, or jeweller's quarter, shews so much riches, such a vast quantity of diamonds, and all kind of precious stones, that they dazzle the sight. The embroiderer's is also very glittering, and people walk here as much for diversion as business. The markets are most of them handsome squares, and admirably well provided, perhaps better than in any other part of the world.

I know you'll expect I should say something particular of the slaves; and you will imagine me half a Turk, when I don't speak of it with the same horror other Christians have done before me. But I cannot forbear applauding the humanity of the Turks to these creatures; they are never ill used, and their slavery is, in my opinion, no worse than servitude all over the world. 'Tis true they have no wages; but they give them yearly clothes to a higher value than our salaries to our ordinary servants.

I have seen no other footsteps of antiquity except the aqueducts, which are so vast that I am apt to believe they are yet more antient than the Greek Empire. The Turks, indeed, have clapped in some stones with Turkish inscriptions, to give their natives the honour of so great a work; but the deceit is easily discovered. — The other publick buildings are the *Hans* and *Monasteries*; the first are very large and numerous; the second few in number, and not at all magnificent. I had the curiosity to visit one of them, and to observe the devotions of the *Dervises*, which are as whimsical as any at Rome. These fellows have permission to marry, but are confined to an odd habit, which is only a piece of coarse white cloth, wrapped about them, with their legs and arms naked. Their order has few other rules, except that of performing their fantastick rites, every Tuesday and Friday,
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which is done in this manner: They meet together in a large hall, where they all stand with their eyes fixed on the ground and their arms across, while the *Imaum* or preacher reads part of the *Alcoran* from a pulpit, placed in the midst; and when he has done, eight or ten of them make a melancholy concert with their pipes, which are no unmusical instruments. Then he reads again, and makes a short exposition on what he has read, after which they sing and play, till their Superior (the only one of them dressed in green) rises and begins a sort of solemn dance. They all stand about him in a regular figure, and while some play, the others tie their robe (which is very wide) fast round their waist, and begin to turn round with an amazing swiftness, and yet with great regard to the music, moving slower or faster as the tune is played. This lasts above an hour, without any of them shewing the least appearance of giddiness, which is not to be wondered at, when it is considered, they are all used to it from their infancy; most of them being devoted to this way of life from their birth. There turned amongst them some little Dervises of six or seven years old, who seemed no more disordered by that exercise than the others. At the end of the ceremony they shout out: "*There is no other God, but God, and Mahomed his Prophet.*," after which they kiss the Superior's hand and retire. The whole is performed with the most solemn gravity. Nothing can be more austere than the form of these people; they never raise their eyes, and seem devoted to contemplation. And as ridiculous as this is in description, there is something touching in the air of submission and mortification they assume. — This letter is of a horrible length; but you may burn it when you have read enough, &c. &c.

THE CLIMATE, NATURAL HISTORY, AND
PRODUCTS OF JAMAICA. *)

Jamaica lies between the 75th and 79th degrees of west longitude from London, and is between seventeen and nineteen degrees distant from the equinoctial. It is in length, from east to west, upwards of one hundred and forty English miles, in breadth about sixty, and of

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*) Wynne General History of the British Empire in America. 2 Vols. London 1770. 8.